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The American RECORD GUIDE

FOR THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



JANUARY, 1949 VOL. XV, NO. 1

Edited by PETER HUGH REED



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The American RECORD GUIDE

January, 1949 ▲ Vol. XV, No. 5

formerly THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



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Recording—*Quo Vadis?*

In the past two years the advent of tape and wire recorders, of wide-range and long-playing recordings, and of television have altered the prospectus on reproduced music in the home. All this, as well as confusing rumors in the field that pre-recorded tape will soon be available, has given rise to the query — which way is recording going? Though less radical than some would think, the changing picture in the field has created general bewilderment. Hearing of improvements and changes in the time-honored disc, the music lover and record collector have become extremely perplexed whether to pursue their purchases as in the past or to make changes in their equipment to accommodate the new. Add to the general confusion of mind, the rising cost of living, and we understand the persistent falling-off of the record business.

Rumors of Victor's new 45 revolutions-per-minute disc — assuredly a radical change — did not help matters. One wonders whether it was solely a business maneuver that the *Wall Street Journal* published the first news on this record early in December and the rest of us were denied information until its demonstration to the press on January 10.

This new disc, 6-7/8 inches in width, proves to be a remarkably distortion-free product, but to the disappointment of many it is not "long-playing" by recently set standards. Made of ruby-red vinylite, it is fine-grooved employing an .001 sylvus, but because of the small diameter it has only the playing time of a regular 12-inch disc — 5 minutes and 10 seconds. Further, it offers a problem for those who would like to convert their current machines as the center hole is 1½ inches wide. To handle this rec-

ord, Victor has a new changing mechanism—said to be the fastest in the industry.

At the New York demonstration on January 10 in the Johnny Victor Theater, the new record was introduced in a far better manner than any similar product heard previously through the long years. On Victor's high-fidelity Berkshire machine, the quality of the recording was made impressive. Whether it is so startlingly in advance of other extended range records, as publicity claims would have us believe, remains to be found out with subsequent tests. The record is reported to have a frequency range up to 15,000 c.p.s. Inasmuch as the average human ear does not go much above 10,000 one wonders whether the majority will consider its reproducing qualities better than other wide-range discs now available.

This new disc will not be marketed until around April 1st, at which time RCA will issue new equipment to accommodate its performance. A portable player will be made available, also several new models of large machines all of which have two mechanisms housed in drawers, one to play the 45 r.p.m. disc and the other to play the 78 r.p.m. disc. The latter records will still be manufactured. No prices on the new records or equipment are announced.

Columbia's 7" Disc

Three days before Victor's scheduled demonstration, Columbia announced a new Microgroove disc, 7 inches in diameter, which plays as long as conventional 10 and 12-inch records, and operates on all LP Microgroove reproducing equipment. The idea of this small record is to provide individual short selections where collections are not desired. Popular music, light classics and short classical selections will undoubtedly prove most welcome on these smaller discs. Moreover, these new records offer substantial savings over their 78 r.p.m. counterparts. They are priced at 60 cents for popular releases and 90 cents for Masterwork releases.

When we look back over the events of the last 12 months both in and out of the record field, we are inclined to echo the words of Nachtigall, the Tinsmith, a minor character in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*. In response to Beckmesser's displeasure at Walther's singing for the Masters, he pertinently says: "Strange is the case!"

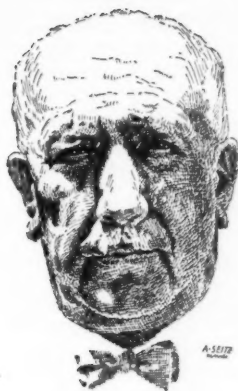
"Strange is the case", indeed, with many things throughout the world today. Look back over the activities in the record field this past year (to say nothing of the Presidential Election), which culminates in a battle by Victor and Columbia for record supremacy. This bid for fame (or should we say feud?) of the two major companies threatens to divide record buyers into two groups. One must decide whether to be a part of the Victor or the Columbia family. What shooting occurs from the side lines is unpredictable at this time, but old friends who are record minded may in time find their friendship disrupted by their choice in record purchases. More than ever before one wishes that a standardization in the recording business could be effected.

The Record Ban

Despite Petrillo's ban on recording this past year, the record companies seemed undismayed. Looking back, one is amazed at the veritable flood of merchandise the companies marketed. Though the ban seemed ominous, few of us took Mr. Petrillo seriously when he said "we are going out of business". Sooner or later, we said, he will listen to reason backed by additional dollars. Yet, it took over seven months before negotiations between Union and the manufacturers began, and another two months after an agreement was effected to allow the Department of Justice to pass on its legality.

Once the recording ban was lifted many of us thought the record companies would take the opportunity to show what they could do with advanced recording technique. Undoubtedly, Victor 45 r.p.m. is a step in that direction, though unfortunately its new speed offers only a size reduction but no improvement in playing time. As the ultimate in music listening is to have a work in complete continuity, it seems a tactical error for Victor not to have included in their "evolutionary" plans discs and reproducers of suitable size to accommodate at least full movements of long works unbroken. The public response to L.P. records is undoubtedly in appreciation of having continuous home reproduction at last, without being slaves to the breaks of hand or mechanical record changing, which inevitably disrupts the musical mood.

(Continued on page 134)



RICHARD STRAUSS

By Neville Cardus

It is a pleasure to present this essay on Strauss by the distinguished English critic, Neville Cardus. Like the previous articles on Brahms (issue of March 1947) and on Mahler (January 1948), this one also derives from Cardus' book, TEN COMPOSERS (Jonathan Cape, London, 1945) and is republished by arrangement with the author and the publisher. —Ed.

In the nineteenth century Pluto held sway over music as over most other things in his widening world. The art expanded beyond its old frontiers; domains of literature, even of painting, were plundered and annexed. Orchestras swelled like armies, and they threatened to become as heavy in accoutrement. Great operahouses and concert-halls produced a strange breed of listener: the serried rows of boxes drooped with the weight and fatigue of millionaires eager for culture. A new music was wanted for a new public, a public that understood more — a little more — about literature than about music, though it was pursuing its studies in 'appreciation' industriously enough. So the symphonic-poem was gratefully seized up-

on; the story or programme could always be followed even when the thread of the musical discourse seemed to get entangled. Besides, the old symphonies scarcely gave the orchestra a chance; and this was the age of the orchestra. (Somebody even suggested the rewriting of Beethoven's trumpet parts.)

The time, the Zeitgeist, produced the man, as usual. In the appropriate atmosphere the genius of Richard Strauss flourished. We were all trying to read Nietzsche; and Strauss at once set him to music, and made our general culture much easier to assimilate, even if it must be admitted that we had to accustom ourselves to what the programme-analysts called his horizontal harmony. But he made a regular royal sound in the orchestra; and that is what we loved most of all. Then he wrote an opera which came home to nearly everybody in the multitudinous and bejewelled audiences of the period. The age was producing a natural cynicism. Gilda and Lucia were fading into museum-pieces. Charpentier's *Louise*, though in the fashionable vein of simulated realism — with the necessary juice of sentiment to wash it all down — unfortunately dealt with the working classes. *Der Rosen-*

kavalier was a masterstroke of opportunism. To sit in a brilliant opera-house of those receding years, and to hear and see *Rosenkavalier*, was to realize that opera and life were for once in a while matched perfectly. The audience, the stage-picture, all the fascinating dye and odours of the music, were only as so many different aspects of the latest act in the eternal comedy of manners. For though Hofmannsthal placed his libretto in the rococo world of Maria Theresa, the music of Strauss belonged to our modern world. Though the nigger boy's flourish at the opera's end seemed to fix the sadness of the Marschallin's story in a distant past, Strauss was cunning, and understood his public. The Marschallin was made real and close to us; many times, when I have attended this opera in the capital cities of the world, I have felt how intimate and pointed was the by-play between stage and many a private and darkened retreat in the theatre. Many a woman has heard her own heart speaking in the Marschallin's music. And all round have I felt the presence, in boxes and stalls, of many Oktavians and Sophies, young life at the springtime. Imagination can hear time running out like sand during the performance of *Rosenkavalier* in a great opera-house at the height of a season. Strauss, the sentimentalist, the cynic, the materialist, the composer who set the nineteenth century to music, to opulent music! He can be called all these things, but he cannot be called them with more force than he can be called a genius and the greatest story-teller in music the world has so far known.

He set the nineteenth century to music; a figure of speech, but it will serve. Nearly every major work of Strauss begins with a great expansion of energy, a leaping upwards; then follows a culmination of force, size and intricacy of parts; then a descent into disillusionment or futility. At the outset of *Don Juan* the music has a fine athletic springiness; a trained-to-the-muscle propulsive strength; the call of the four horns to action is grand and thrilling; the sequences towards the climax are masterful and proud and magnificent. The end is revulsion, dramatically necessary, of course, for the point of the poem; but how convincingly Strauss does it! Not as convincingly does he conclude *Heldenleben*, when a noble conclusion was urgently demanded, after the

hero's gigantic climbings in the first section of the work, where we can almost see his fist-shakings, his penultimate intake of energy before his final capture of the summit. But the end is no heroic apotheosis; the superman lapses into human-all-too-human comforts; we cannot feel that a victory of the spirit has been torn out of the storm. Again, in *Tod und Verklärung*, there is no spiritual victory; the peroration is hollow and rhetorical. So with the closing scene of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*; the opera's hotch-potch of metaphysics is not transformed and clarified to noble ends; the C major harmonies are merely childish, not childlike. The seven-leagued boots of Zarathustra are changed in the finale of the symphonic-poem of the fireside slippers of a tired man. Even *Der Rosenkavalier* ends with the astringent jangling of the Silver Rose motif; disillusionment is not far away.

Another strange point; Strauss's music seems to follow the psychological curve of the nineteenth century, a curve from urge and conquest to unfulfilment; also it traces the psychological curve of Strauss's own career as an artist — from the brave dawn of *Don Juan* to *Daphne*. Let us look into this strange tragi-comedy. We need not stress our moral tale; it will emerge as we proceed. As Hazlitt said of Spenser's *The Fairie Queene*, we need not be afraid of the Allegory; it won't bite us.

II

The ironic imps made sport with Strauss from the beginning. They dressed him when he was young in the sober and discreet garb of the respected absolute musicians of the period. In the Violin sonata, the *Burleske*, and the Piano quartet, his three most significant early works, Strauss's emerging genius assumes at times the aspect of Brahms. But mischief, and the bedevilment to come, peep out from under the cowl; we are reminded of Mephisto disguised in the long mantle of Faust:

"Use well your time! It flies so swiftly from us; but time through order may be won; so, Friend, — first the collegium logicum" . . .

Till Eulenspiegel flits through the Improvisation of the Violin sonata, winks at Johannes during the middle part of the *Burleske*, and threatens to disturb the academic

decorum of the quartet in the scherzo. At the age of twenty-four, Strauss plunged into the vortex of nineteenth-century music; he was his own *Don Juan*, sending his young eagles into the sun, dazzled with the urge and cleverness given him by his fates. Master of the orchestra at twenty-four, an orchestra of the age of gold and brass; here were riches and temptation, the orchestra of Midas. It is difficult even yet to believe that a young man composed *Don Juan*; it is the most remarkable example in music of genius springing full-armed into action. It is true that Mozart and Schubert showed their genius before they were twenty-four; but in 1884 the merely cerebral part of the labour of composition had developed to a length not dreamed of by Mozart, Schubert or Beethoven. The simple task of copying the instrumental parts of *Don Juan*, let alone thinking of them or organizing them, would have given poor Schubert the vertigo. The composing of *Don Juan* was one of the miracles of music; bliss it must have been for Strauss to be alive in that young dawn; nay, it was high noon for him before he knew that he was born, throwing masses of tone about him like a lord of creation, raising new worlds, whipping-up whirlwinds of string-tone, then subduing them to a warm glow of brass and horn. Never before had violins cracked such a whip as Strauss cracked for the unleashing of *Don Juan*; he found with unerring instinct the right musical *habitat* for his theme. The whole point of *Don Juan* is that life must be a very welter for the Don to plunge into recklessly. Where is there a welter of orchestration more reckless than the welter which Strauss sets into motion with one stroke at the beginning of *Don Juan*? Not until now had music known this heady, springy yet taut energy; music had, as Samuel Butler said, wriggled with Bach, and writhed with Wagner — extravagant language, no doubt, but we can see the point of it. Berlioz kept the body and muscles of music well-trained, even to gauntness, while feeding the art on the romantic sweets. Then for years music languished in the drowsy air of hot voluptuous interiors. Strauss never was a romantic; he was made of sterner stuff, and, what is more, he was made of worldly stuff. There is no nostalgia in Strauss; whenever he glances back, it is without ache. The

Marschallin sings of time that stealthily steals beauty from life. But Strauss uses time purely and simply as a dramatic affect perceived by an artist conniving objectively a picture, a pattern; he uses time ironically not poetically. No; Strauss has always been too objective, too much the sharp realistic observer, to fit in with a romantic aesthetic which asks for a certain reflectiveness, a sense of the pathos of distance. Strauss tells the tale of *Eulenspiegel* without either sentimentally doting on the past or on legendary characters; he rounds off his narrative with a perfect little epilogue which says, without moralizing and without romantic regret, "It all happened long ago"; it is a sort of chimney-corner ending as the children release their pent-up breath.

In *Don Juan*, Strauss is not only a narrator; he is the life-force and protagonist. I cannot think that this work was composed at a writing-table by a young man sitting apart from what he was hurling into existence; I see him hurled with it, for a lifetime, until weary and spent.

The new toy tyrannized him. A bigger orchestra, a mightier world to conquer every time. Temporary defeat occurred when he invaded the territory of idealism and religiosity and forgot to take with him his irony. Later in life he learned to know better; for he wrote a letter to Hofmannsthal confessing that the 'Josefslegende' was beyond him, as there was no piety at all in the Strauss family. *Tod und Verklärung* is the most subjective of the tone-poems of Strauss — and herein rests a tale of some importance to our discussion of his aesthetic and psychological make-up. The most objective of the tone-poems is *Till Eulenspiegel*; it is an etching of Till seen from the outside; Strauss does not let the rascal dawdle and dream, and he does not, as I say, moralize. *Till Eulenspiegel* bites into the mind like the lines of a medieval wood-cut. The use in this work of rondo-form was an inspiration; the first condition of the grotesque style is a contracted energy which turns upon itself in lines of black-and-white. Despite the clamour of orchestration in *Till*, the scoring is not fulsome in a slowly-expanding harmony as in *Tod und Verklärung*. Strauss is at his best when he sees swiftly and objectively; he is at his worst when he trusts to subjective emotion and to the deliberate

and spacious harmonic rhetoric of the German romantic school proper. *Tod und Verklärung* is a failure because in it Strauss attempted to treat a spiritual idea in the style of Lisztian "transcendentalism". This symphonic-poem conforms to the broad and gradually-modulated sequences of a slow movement, a development-section of quick tempi, and a resolution of dissonance into the Lisztian apotheosis. But Strauss could not make music at this slow-moving pace; as soon as he stops to think or to feel he lapses into the banal. *Tod und Verklärung* is vivid enough when Strauss is describing the airless stillness of the sick-room, the slipping-away of life, the wan flickerings of the rushlight, the terrible suspense, the failing heart-beats. When we reach the trailing clouds of glory of childhood, and the transfiguration to loftier spheres, the music echoes the cadence which denotes the ending of the perfect day, or the Serenata of Braga. Strauss has neither ethic nor metaphysic, neither romance nor reflection. He wrote illustrated fiction in music; he changed Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* into a novel of adventure. We do not think of his works, even of the purely instrumental works, in terms of music; his art is graphic, and when the sounds of the Straussian orchestra have died down, as to-day they seem to be dying down like an ebbing sea, our imagination is left alive with pictures: Till, jaunty with hands in pockets walking away whistling; Till, upsetting academic apple-carts, skyrocketing and somersaulting, riding the broomstick of mischief; Till, before the judges, disrespectful and not entirely subdued; Till, hitched aloft by the rope, squeaking out his last breath, then dangling like a puppet of rag and sawdust in the air. We see rather than hear Sancho Panza and Don Quixote shaking the water from their drenched bodies after the escapade in the boat; the pizzicato notes are the dripping of the water. We see rather than hear them kneel down and offer up their prayer of thanksgiving. We see rather than hear Salome's life battered out brutally, long after the curtain has fallen and the visual presentation has passed from memory. We see rather than hear the accumulation of hate and evil in *Elektra*, as Strauss's polyphony breeds and spreads like a cancer of music. We see rather than hear the Prince in *Die*

Frau ohne Schatten turning to stone as the gongs are struck to a hardness that offends against all that music subsists on. We see rather than hear the bucolic gemuetlich shape of Dulcinea; we see as well as we hear the panniered sweep of the Marschallin when she enters and commands the stage in Act III of *Rosenkavalier*; we see as well as we hear the Hero's Consort wheedling the hero in *Heldenleben*. We do not indeed always hear the music in our minds as we see these creations of Strauss; with other composers of programme-music or opera, nothing remains for imagination to seize on if we forget the actual thematic and musical stuff of their presentations. Strauss at times seemed ready to barter the very ears of music in exchange for more and more eyes. In the nineteenth century, which witnessed the development of the camera to the cinema, Strauss gave us the first motion pictures — in music, with the appropriate 'fade outs'. What are the closing scenes of *Don Quixote* and *Heldenleben* but perfectly-calculated and lighted "fade-outs"?

(To be continued next month)

Recording—Quo Vadis?

(Continued from page 130)

Competition in the record field, both in this country and abroad, has undoubtedly promoted recent changes. Unquestionably, English Decca's "full frequency range recording" has been a troublesome competitor to domestic products. It was not solely a matter of its extended range, however, for this exists in many domestic recordings. Rather it has been a matter of the material quality of the record and the workmanship. As one executive of a record company said to us recently: "The difference in tonal quality between most of our domestic releases and these new English wide-range ones is relatively unimportant. It is the carelessness of the manufacturing in this country which has given these importations undue precedence."

Changes in the industry were to be expected. In the machine age things move forward, as the inventive powers of man increase. That they create consumer confusion is unfortunate. With the advent of

the new Victor disc, the consumer faces the need of three turntables and pickups to play all existent records. In the face of this, one wonders how many people will concur with the contention of Frank Fulsom, president of the Radio Corporation of America, who in his introductory remarks to the press on January 10 stated that Victor's adoption of an entirely new speed was a "healthy ordinary competitive job that people do every day in business". When told of this remark, Edward Wallerstein, chairman of the board of Columbia Records, Inc., stated to the press: "We do not see what additional advantages a 45 r.p.m. record can offer to compensate for the unfortunate conflict it appears to be creating in the minds of both the public and the industry."

Having now heard the new Microgroove record played by the best magnetic pickups through our own extended-range equipment, we are very much disposed in its favor. Already, we have replaced a great many Columbia 78 r.p.m. sets in our library with their Microgroove counterparts. Rumor has it that other companies are contemplating issuing similar long-playing discs, operating at the standard 33-1/3. Already, Mercury has issued such a record. Thus, despite opposition and impending competition, this type of record may soon become a commonplace item in the trade.

The question arises — what of pre-recorded tape? As the field of tape recording is still limited to amateur air checks and home performances, we can only consider tape now as a home auxiliary to the various commercial discs.

In the face of so many new and impending changes, everybody is naturally asking which way is recording going. Yet, is it truly necessary to worry about the way recording is going? Has not the old way served us well? It is not obsolete and, according to statements of heads of all record companies, the familiar 78 r.p.m. record will still continue to be manufactured. Therefore, why make changes if one finds them inexpedient at this time? Is the enjoyment of music only keeping up with the Joneses. Is it essential to the enjoyment of music to have every new reproducing device in the home? If one has found pleasure from a library of recordings perhaps acquired by many sacrifices through the years, it is unthinkable

that one should junk them and start all over because new products exist. We cannot imagine parting with many 78 r.p.m. discs in our library today. Many are old friends — time-honored, reliable, and gratifying. If tomorrow brings pre-recorded tape, we doubt that the record will be truly displaced. We concur with one leading engineer of our acquaintance who says: "Had we known tape recording through the long years instead of disc recording and suddenly the latter appeared, it would be hailed as loudly as some hail tape today, because it is so easy to handle."

To ours and preceding generations has been given an adventure in music's reproduction in the home that is not only unique but unparalleled in its development of music appreciation. We refer, of course, to the record. For no other medium of music's reproduction in the home has permitted the personal selectivity. It was the only medium whereby one could hear the music desired when one wanted it. There is a subtle manifestation of human satisfaction in placing the record on the turntable and manipulating the controls which has not been expounded upon or stressed by psychologists. The very fact that the individual so employed governs the control of reproduction gives him the feeling of having participated in a small way in the performance. That dormant longing to make music oneself is in part satisfied by the record. There is no question that it has contributed to the record collecting urge. Among collectors of old vocal recordings are many who have nourished a yearning to be a singer. Hobbies often drive from frustrations, providing the individual with a helpful and curative medium of self-expression. It is not necessary to extoll the qualities of music, its powers in healing have proved efficient in modern times. It would be interesting to know how many record collections have cheated the psychiatrist of money more fruitfully spent.

Though you admit with the writer that "strange is the case" of the way of recording these days, is that a reason to neglect or give up a favorite pursuit? With all the encumbrance of record albums and single discs, the care essential to their welfare, is not the pleasure they provide assured and hence of prime importance? Surely, if one has money invested in equipment that has

served satisfactorily, its service should not be retarded by new devices which cannot be afforded at the moment. There is little reason to curtail one's purchases along lines long pursued. It is a mistake to believe the 78 r.p.m. disc will become obsolete, indeed there is every reason to believe its value may increase as time goes on. Someday, those 78 r.p.m. records being stored in attics and other places these days may have a greater value than such records possessed in former times.

* * *

Your editor will give his second talk and a program of modern and old recorded music for the Philadelphia Record Society on February 17. Readers interested to attend the meeting will be welcome. It will be held at the Air-Tone Studios, 1537 Chestnut St., Philadelphia — time, 8:15p.m.



Collectors' Recordings

VERDI: *Rigoletto*—*Caro nome*; DONIZETTI: *Lucia di Lammermoor*—*Ardon gl' incensi*; sung by Selma Kurz (soprano) with orchestra (ca. 1910). IRCC 3043, \$2.25.

DONIZETTI: *La Favorita*—*O mio Fernando*; sung by Marie Delna (contralto) with orchestra (ca. 1910); and BIZET: *Carmen*—*All' undir del sistro il suono*; sung by Eleanora de Cisneros (mezzo-soprano) with orchestra (ca. 1910). IRCC 3045, \$2.25.

WAGNER: *Die Meistersinger*—*Am stillen Herd*; SCHUMANN: *Ich grolle nicht* (both in French); sung by Ernest Van Dyck (tenor) with piano. IRCC 3046, 10-inch, \$1.75.

ROSTAND: *Cyrano de Bergerac*—*Ballade du duel*; by Constant Coquelin (actor) (1902); and HUGO: *Un Peu de Musique*; by Sarah Bernhardt (actress) (1902). IRCC 3047, 10-inch, \$1.75.

DEBUSSY: *Pelléas et Mélisande*—*Mes longs cheveux*; *Ariettes oubliées*—No. 2, *Il pleure dans mon coeur*; No. 3, *L'ombre des arbres*; No. 5, *Green*; sung by Mary Garden (soprano) with Claude Debussy at the piano (1904). IRCC 3048, \$2.25.

● IRCC's bulletin claims for the cylinders made by Selma Kurz that they are "certainly her most brilliant recordings." On the evidence of these dubbings I am inclined to agree. The voice is very full and forward — perhaps too forward to do full justice to the distinctive quality of the tone. This is true rather of the medium and lower registers; the high tones are clear and beautifully rounded, and there are some dazzling flashes of *coloratura*. Both selections contain samples of her phenomenal trill. The *Rigoletto* is unusual in that it begins with Gilda's repetition of the name *Gualtier Malde*.

The Delna performance is far more satisfactory than the French version of the same aria by the same artist recently offered by Collectors Record Shop. Here the wonderful big tone is very impressive indeed, and provides evidence enough to account for the singer's tremendous reputation in France during the early years of the century. Unfortunately she crowded a little too much of the long scene into the recording, and the result is somewhat hurried and lacking in poise. De Cisneros, on the reverse, does a good competent Italianate job of the *Carmen* air, showing a fine voluminous voice.

In the very early days of IRCC a re-pressing was issued of two Schumann songs by Ernest Van Dyck which was such as to make one incredulous of his great celebrity. This different version of one of the same songs, in French translation, is incomparably better, though the reproduction is still rather primitive. Whether Van Dyck was ever a great singer, however, is open to some question — Henderson remarks that "if Ernest Van Dyck was right in his method of singing Wagner, then Jean de Reszke was wrong." If not great he was certainly famous, and this recording would seem to give some idea of his quality and style.

The Mary Garden-Debussy songs have long been sought after by collectors, and their value as souvenirs is obvious enough. Happily at the same time they have value of another sort, for they bear the hall-mark of this great singer. Naturally the composer's piano playing reproduces less well than the young and vibrant Garden voice. Formerly issued by IRCC on two 10-inch discs, they have been newly dubbed in this more economical form. The voice has been brought forward, and the pitch has been corrected, with corresponding effect on the *tempi* — *Green* is still done very rapidly, but not rushed as it seemed before. In every way the new version of the 1904 recording is a vast improvement, and the disc has interest beyond that of the collectors of antiques.

The speaking record of the collection presents the creator of the role of Cyrano in a famous moment from that play, and the "golden-voiced" Sarah in a Victor Hugo poem. The

question of *tempo* comes up again here: I wonder if she would have spoken quite so fast had it not been for the time limitations of the record. The rather surprisingly even inflections of the voice have a fascination of their own.
P.L.M.

DONIZETTI: *La Favorita* — *Vein, Loenora; A tanto amor*; sung by Riccardo Stracciari (baritone) with orchestra. Aria disc AD 1-2, 10-inch, \$1.84.

BOITO: *Mefistofele* — *Colma il tuo core*; **DONIZETTI:** *Don Pasquale* — *Sogno soave e casto*; sung by Fernando de Lucia (tenor) with orchestra. Aria disc AD 3-4, 10-inch, \$1.84.

GIORDANO: *Fedora* — *Amor ti vieta*; **MAS-SENET:** *Manon* — *Chiudo gli occhi*; sung by Giuseppe Anselmi (tenor) with piano. Aria disc AD 5-6, 10-inch, \$1.84.

VERDI: *Aida* — *Gia i sacerdoti adunansi; Misero appien mi festi*; sung by Nini Frascani (mezzo-soprano) and Giovanni Zenatello (tenor) with orchestra. Aria disc AD 9, 10-inch, \$1.84.

● Here is another series of dubbings from historically valuable masters, sponsored this time by Hargail, Music Press. Without exception the discs have interest, some a good deal of it, and all are clearly re-recorded. De Lucia is always worth studying, and here there is especial attraction in hearing him sing music more "modern" and declamatory than we usually associate with him (though he was a celebrated Canio in his time). The Boito selection is delivered with fine fire and firm tone, thoroughly masculine and thoroughly controlled. The more characteristic Donizetti piece is done very freely — one wonders how in the opera any baritone could have stayed with him, for this scene was conceived by the composer as a duet. The orchestra is quite weak. One of the special distinctions of this tenor appears to lie in the fact that most avid collectors and discographers seem not to have traced all his works for the phonograph, nor have they established dates for the many known de Lucia records. One can only guess that these were taken from Phonotype originals made late in his life. Stracciari, for his part, does some good smooth singing in the *Favorita* airs, with warm, though open tone, and welcome musical solidity. A pleasing, if not an exciting disc.

Anselmi records are rarer, and so, indeed, is the quality of voice. In these selections (dated by Bauer between 1907 and 1909) his silvery clear tone is exceptionally attractive, though his treatment of the *Fedora* is unconscionably slow and detailed, and the *Manon* is translated in more respects than language. There is an interpolated high note at the end. The *Aida* duet shows one of the great tenors of recent times as he was in 1906, when the voice was fresh, young and vibrant, though his singing was less subtle than it later became. His partner curiously resembles the mezzo who later became his wife — Maria Gay — and with whom he was to record this same scene for Columbia. Frascani's typical Italian voice ap-

pears as not altogether even but vital and exciting. There is amazingly little cut from the scene thus presented on these two ten-inch sides.
—P.L.M.

Philadelphia Society Discs

Of interest to collectors are the repressings of rare recordings by singers of the past being issued from time to time by the Philadelphia Record Society. They are pressed on ruby red vinylite and in all that we have heard to date the re-recording is exceptionally good.

The first ten discs put out by this society for its members are:

1. *La Favorita* — *Spirto gentil*, and *I Puritani* — *A te, o cara*; A. Bonci.
2. *Romeo et Juliette* — *Ah! leve-toi*; L. Muratore and *Contes d'Hoffman* — *Je me nom Copelius*; A. Didur.
3. *Adriana Lecouvreur* — *Io son l'umile ancello*; and *Zaza* — *Dir, che ci sono al mondo*; Claudia Muzio.
4. *Lucia* — *Cruda, funesta*; Stracciari, and *La Forza del Destino* — *Son pereda*; P. Amato.
5. *Walkure* — *Ein Schwert*; and *Rienzi* — *Erstehe hoha Roma*; Jacques Urlus.
6. *Prophete* — *Ah, mon fils*; Maria Dina, and *Louise* — *Depuis le jour* (1907); Mary Garden.
7. *Siberia* — *Orride steppe*; Mario Gillion, and *Siberia* — *T'in contral per via*; A. Bassi.
8. *Die Entfuhrung aus dem Serail* — *Marten aller Arten*; Lilli Lehmann, and *Don Giovanni* — *Non mi dir*; Frieda Hempel.
9. *Prophete* — *Spora Berta*; Vignas, and *Prophete* — *Beviam e intorno*; Mario Gillion.
10. *Monna Vanna* — *Elle est a moi*; L. Muratore and William Tell — *Sois immobile*; Jean Note.

The selections are chosen by the members of the Club and the records loaned by different members to be dubbed. Couplings are decided by majority of votes at a meeting. The club welcomes out-of-town members. For information, write the president, Mr. Addison Foster, 1226 Montgomery Ave., Narberth, Pa.

IRCC

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RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS



BEETHOVEN: *Egmont — Overture, Op. 84;* Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. Victor disc 12-0288, price \$1.25.

▲ There is extraordinary polish in the orchestral playing — precision in the chordal passages and in the bowing of the strings. Koussevitzky seems more concerned with the perfection of the instrumental articulation than with the discursive aspects of the music. Yet, examining the score one finds the conductor observes the markings faithfully — shading to lovely *pianissimi* and building to imposing *crescendi*. Though the climaxes have more weight of sound than dramatic significance, the performance has a vitality and vividness in the splendid reproduction. No one would say that Beethoven was not well served, though one might ask for more intensification of dramatic implication. Like *Coriolanus*, this overture

is a miniature tone poem though strictly adhering to the classical sonata form. The late Henry Krehbiel outlined quite a detailed program for this work, which is not essential to one's enjoyment of the music, though it might be worth looking up.

—P.H.R.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21;* The Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York, conducted by Bruno Walter. Columbia set M or MM-796, four discs, price \$6.00, or Microgroove 10-inch disc ML-2027, price \$3.85.

▲ There is geniality and benignity in Walter's reading of this early Beethoven symphony. There is also a touch of the romanticism one associates with the Vienna of pre-World War I days. The performance recalls the manner of Weingartner. The symphony has its roots in the 18th century, though the Beethoven stride always moving forward is apparent. One should read Tovey for stimulating appreciation of this music. This is the sort of music-making, which allows the listener to relax in his seat, the work

of a trustworthy musician, well worth hearing. Those familiar with the Toscanini performance may miss the bolder insistence of his opening *Allegro con brio*, the more purposeful shaping of line and phrase in the *Andante*, and the more intensified exultation of his finale. The difference in temperament of the two men is marked. Yet, this is a performance that would send listeners home from a concert fully satisfied that they had heard the work under favorable circumstances, and its desirability on records is assured. Moreover, its advent on a 10-inch long-playing disc gives it precedence over preceding issues. The edge in reproduction lies with the 78 r.p.m. version (yet I shall keep the l.p. one). The spacing on the regular issue is poorly contrived with many sides hardly half filled. The work could easily have been fitted to three 12-inch discs and should have been. There is no reason that those wishing to acquire the 78 r.p.m. set should be charged for half empty record faces.

—P.H.R.

BENJAMIN (arr. Richardson): *Jamaican Rumba*; and CURZON: *The Boulevardier* — *Characteristic Intermezzo*; The Queens Hall Light Orchestra, conducted by Sidney Torch. Columbia 10-inch disc 17561-D, price \$1.00.

▲Exceptionally good forward-sounding recording, accentuating upper strings a bit. The popularity of Benjamin's *Jamaican Rumba* makes an orchestral arrangement inevitable, but I plump for Primrose's viola version. Curzon's piece suggests a gay blade strutting down the boulevard, looking the ladies over. This is lightweight but gay music with a rhythmic buoyance. Good performances.

—P.G.

DVORAK: *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 95 (From the New World)*; Leopold Stokowski and his Orchestra. Victor vinylite set DV-25, five discs, price \$11.00 (manual \$12.00), also regular DM-1248, price \$7.25 (manual \$8.25).

▲A splendid recording competing with the best European "full-frequency" discs. Comparison reveals a clarity of line and an almost microscopic detail with an overall tonal virtuosity which is definitely in favor of Victor's reproductive technique. This is no back seat in the upper balcony prospectus

on an orchestra, but a ground floor one — the listener feels as though he sat in the most advantageous spot in the concert hall for the performance.

Of Stokowski's several interpretations of this symphony on records, this appeals to me most. It is less capricious, more straightforward, with the right lilt in the melodies of the quick movements. True, the conductor intrudes some retards, essentially personal, and makes some instrumental alterations, but few will quarrel with these. Stokowski performs the first movement with surging drama, outling its elemental force. His treatment of the Largo, definitely enhanced by the solo playing of Mitchell Miller on the English horn, suggests the tonal painter familiar with the composer's *Biblical Songs*, with which this *Adagio* is closely related. The Scherzo, handled with unusual finesse, in no way mitigates its barbaric qualities. The finale is a difficult movement to make dramatically justifiable; its combative qualities are unconvincingly exploited and broken up. Here the conductor is less persuasive despite the technical excellence of the playing. One suspects that Stokowski has a real fondness for this music, for the impression conveyed by the performance is one of sympathetic absorption.

—P.H.R.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 88 in G major*; Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia set M or MM-796, three discs, price \$4.75.

▲A well polished, thoroughly presentable performance of one of Haydn's most skillfully contrived symphonies, in which the invention is of a high order. It cannot be said that Ormandy shows the imagination of Toscanini in this music, yet the orchestral playing and its reproduction is of such a high order that one welcomes this release. The Toscanini version, made in 1938, has a shallowness of tone owing to the characteristics of the radio studio in which it was recorded. There is none of the unpleasant sharpness to the Philadelphia strings that one finds in that earlier set. Indeed, the quality of the sound is consistently in keeping with eminence of the orchestra and the solo playing throughout is of a high order.

—P.H.R.

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1 in F minor*; Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia disc 12928-D, price \$1.25.

▲ This is an orchestral version of the 14th rhapsody, more familiar in the version for piano and orchestra as *Hungarian Fantasia*. It is a pompous and showy piece which gains when performed without interpretative extravagance. Ormandy handles the music expertly; the proportioning is skillfully devised. The perfection of orchestral technique associated with the Philadelphia is exploited to advantage. Sometimes one wonders about the reactions of an orchestra of this calibre when called upon to perform old war-horses. Efficiency is evidenced, which in music of this kind suffices. Excitement does not have to be magnified when you have such rich, full-bloomed reproduction.

—P.H.R.

MENDELSSOHN: *Incidental Music to A Midsummer Night's Dream*; NBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. Victor set DM-1280, four discs, price \$6.00 (manual \$7.00).

▲ One's belief in a miracle of music-making is substantiated in this recording. No one, in our estimation, excels Toscanini in this music. Some years back he recorded this suite with the Philadelphia Orchestra but the reproduction was impaired in the processing of the discs. That seemingly irreparable loss is at long last splendidly atoned for in this release, which is excellently recorded with a spaciousness of sound behind the NBC Symphony suggesting the depth of Carnegie Hall.

It is less strange than some would have us think that Mendelssohn — a German — proved "so wonderfully and classically attentive to his Shakespeare". True, no one has ever written music that coincides so perfectly with Shakespeare's poetry, but the Germans have long shown their appreciation for the Bard of Avon. I wonder how many of us have heard Mendelssohn's music mated to Shakespeare's play and realized its fitting perfection. Tovey outlines its fitness in his splendid notes on this suite. Few will have heard the final piece which Toscanini includes in this set, in which the music of the overture returns with the voices of Titania

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and her fairy choir. An unnamed Woman's Choir and Edna Phillips, soprano, render the vocal parts of this piece competently.

The spirit of eternal youth prevails in Toscanini's handling of this music. It is not the infinite care and accuracy of his performance that alone impresses — though to many this cannot fail to delight as well as astound. Rather it is the light-hearted eagerness and buoyancy that he imparts which seems to say with Wordsworth: "Many are our joys in youth, but oh! what happiness to live when every hour brings palpable access of knowledge, when all knowledge is delight, and sorrow is not there!"

Time has not dissipated Toscanini's ability to enter into the young-in-heart enchantment of this music, though it has undoubtedly given him fuller knowledge in its perfection of performance. —P.H.R.

MENDELSSOHN: *Ruy Blas* — *Overture*, Op. 95; San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Pierre Monteux. Victor disc 12-0657, price \$1.25.

▲ In contrast to Beethoven's *Egmont* — *Overture*, Mendelssohn's *Ruy Blas* is less concerned with the drama to which it was linked. As Tovey says, it "is a piece of vigorous and effective music which has well earned its popularity with audiences that know nothing about its subject". On the strength of this, Monteux's forthright performance is quite appropriate, for after all this was one of Mendelssohn's melodramatic outbursts. It so happens however that Beecham has shown us in another performance (Columbia disc 70352) that this music can be stimulating without being merely blatant or ostentatious. The recording here is a considerable improvement over the Beecham's (made in 1940) but the playing of the San Francisco Symphony is somewhat coarser than the old London Philharmonic, especially in the brass sections. —P.H.R.

MILHAUD: *Le Boeuf sur le Toit*; played by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Mitropoulos. Columbia set MX-308, two discs, price \$3.50.

▲ There are a great many seldom heard works continually mentioned in histories of music which pedagogues report to be im-

portant in the development of a composer, the beginning of a new trend, or perhaps even a milestone in the progress of musical composition. *Le Boeuf sur le Toit*, here presented for the first time on records in the orchestral version, is a charter member of this unhappy group, which also contains, among others, Schoenberg's *Kammer Symphonie*, Satie's *Parade*, Berg's *Lulu*, etc. It is ironical that the program notes supplied in the album's cover describing the astounding activities of the stage entertainment are more diverting than the music itself.

Le Boeuf sur le Toit was originally conceived as a "cinema-symphony on South American airs". It was adapted by Cocteau in 1920 for a pantomime farce of his devising in which the Fratellini, the famous acrobatic clowns, were featured. The scene, set in an American speakeasy of the prohibition period, provides the title of the English version, "The Nothing Doing Bar".

Milhaud, like Debussy, who as far back as 1910 made use of ragtime in his *General Lavine* — *Eccentric*, and Satie, who electrified Paris in 1917 with his *Parade*, was infatuated with the possibilities of the negro jazz idiom. He himself has said of this period, "Jazz was like a beneficent thunderclap which cleared the art-sky". The ultimate fruition of this preoccupation was reached in the ballet *La Creation de Monde*, one of his most vital and compelling scores. In *Le Boeuf sur le Toit* South American tunes, mostly in rumba time, are treated in a syncopated rhythmic fashion intended to simulate jazz patterns. Polytonal devices of a rather biting flavor are often employed in the harmony, so that at times it sounds as though a giant jukebox were grinding out four or five different treatments of the same tune simultaneously.

After repeated hearings of these discs, I can not say that I am able to derive much pleasure from them. Once initial curiosity was satiated, the constant rhythmic similarity became tiresome, the naive "jazz" figures of the ragtime period annoyingly dated, the banal themes from our Good Neighbors brazenly cheap. I feel that some of the blame for this dissatisfaction should be awarded to Mitropoulos. He has favored the brutal, tawdry aspects of the score, bringing out the secondary melodic and contrapuntal lines in a jarring melange of blar-

ing sound. I'm still curious to hear how this music would sound in the hands of a sensitive French conductor such as Ansermet or Desormiere, who might very well bring forth the subtleties overlooked in the reading at hand. —A.W.P.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 39 in E flat major (K. 543)*; played by the Cleveland Orchestra, conducted by George Szell. Columbia set MM-801, three discs, price \$4.75.

▲Some there are (E.T.A. Hoffman, for one) who find much hidden meaning in this outwardly blithe, completely engaging work of the composer's thirty-second year. Perhaps the most easily assimilated of Mozart's "big three", it has an added sweetness due to the omission of oboes from the scoring. Whatever the strength of these implications, Szell has chosen to ignore all that is not plainly printed in the score. His reading is crisp, precise — the model of mathematical correctness, with all sentimentality expunged. While his tempi are not particularly rapid, there is a taut energy to his direction that propagates a brisk feeling of speedy efficiency.

Previously one could choose between the Beecham — LPO (Columbia set 456) and the Walter — BBC Symphony (Victor set 258). I have always liked the graceful delineation of Walter's opening phrases and his gentle handling of the "carousel" minuet, but unfortunately the playing is little better than mediocre and the recording hopelessly dated. Beecham, always Beecham, hugs the middle of the road with a studied suavity that blandly makes its points in a thoughtful but not especially profound manner.

Those of us who have become attached to the more personal content of earlier recordings will probably find Szell's version a bit stark. Otherwise, as an introduction to the mature works of Mozart, I can recommend it wholeheartedly as a straightforward, unadorned presentation of the score. Furthermore, it is the only available set with the advantages of modern recording. —A.W.P.

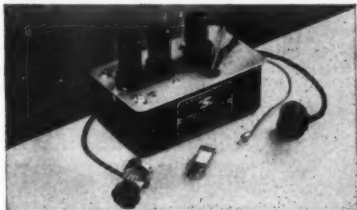
MUSIC FOR THE FILMS: *Stairway to Heaven* — *Prelude* (Gray); *Spellbound* — *Theme from the Concerto* (Rosza); *The Loves of Joanna Godden* (Vaughan Williams); *Wanted for Murder* — *Theme*

(Spoliansky); *This Man is Mine* — *Theme* (Gray); Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Ernest Irving and Queen's Hall Light Orchestra, conducted by Charles Williams. Columbia set MM-794, three discs, price \$4.75.

▲Students of music for the films should not look to this album as a representative sampling of the difficult and much-maligned craft of contriving tonal backgrounds for moving pictures. Granted these excerpts have no particular form because of the peculiar requirements of the medium and not for any lack of initiative on the part of the composer; nevertheless, it can not be said that any of these selections rises above undistinguished mediocrity in matters of harmonic or melodic invention.

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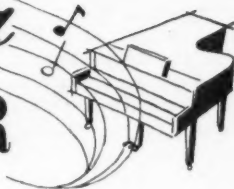
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Spoliansky's score is in the "Warsaw Concerto" style — a lukewarm imitation of that effective work, while Gray and Rozsa lean toward the Steiner — Newman Hollywood school, the latter adapting a theme from a well-known modern symphony for his purpose. Even the revered name of Vaughan Williams fails us on this occasion. His contribution is no less pedestrian than that of his colleagues, and in no way comparable to the outstanding film scores of Walton, Poulenc, Thomson, Prokofiev, Korngold, Milhaud and Copland, to mention but a few that come rapidly to mind.

These tidbits are well played and faithfully recorded. I can see little value in the contents of this album, however. Most any of the standard musical comedy scores contains far more rewarding material for listening in lighter moments. —A.W.P.



FAURÉ: *Ballade for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 19*; Gaby Casadesus with Lamoureux Orchestra, conducted by Manuel Rosenthal. Vox set \$6.45, two discs, price \$3.40.

▲ This composition with its poetic serenity and delicate combinations of sound is essentially Gallic in spirit. For this reason, an artist of French extraction is to be preferred in its performance and Mme. Casadesus's expressively articulated rendition proves most welcome. She shows herself more *en rapport* with this music than did the English Kathleen Long, whose admirable pianism conveys no more than a consistent sobriety of mood. If one agrees with the composer's biographers that this score suggests Fauré as a disciple of Chopin and Saint-Saëns, then we admit a warm romanticism and a delicate imagery essential to its welfare. Mme. Casadesus, I believe, coached with Fauré, so perhaps it was he who stimulated her insight into this music. Koehlin tells us that in its background Fauré had in mind "an imaginary forest whose myriad rustlings of fairies and sylphs accompany the soaring initial theme". Paranthetically, he adds "we are assured that Fauré had in

mind the forest of Siegfried; but without Mime, Siegfried, Wotan, or the dragon — and without Wagner". Thus, we may assume that the composer aimed for imagery, and though the sequence of mood is unexplained, the *Ballade* is in the nature of a tone poem. It recalls to mind Witkowski's atmospheric *Mon Lac*, a similar composition seemingly fallen into neglect, which Robert Casadesus once recorded back in the late 1920s (French Columbia discs 9626/28 — now a collector's item). —P.H.R.

HAYDN: *Concerto No. 1 in C major*; played by Isaac Stern (violin) and string orchestra with Alexander Zakin (cembalo). Columbia set MM-799, three discs, price \$4.75.

▲ This, the first domestic recording of a Haydn violin concerto is one of two works dedicated by the composer to Luigi Tomasini, first violinist of the Esterhazy court orchestra. Haydn was at that time enjoying the dream of all composers — an orchestra of his won, unlimited rehearsals (no union), and a sympathetic patron. The concerto is a gay, spirited piece — tender in its slow movement — throughout a complete delight. The release is doubly welcome as it permits a closer acquaintance with the abilities of Isaac Stern, unquestionably one of the best of the younger contingent of concert artists. Assisted by Alexander Zakin (Stern's recital accompanist) together with a first-rate string orchestra, and complemented by unusually clean, brilliant recording technique, the young violinist has accomplished an album that may be considered definitive without abusing that over-worked term. —A.W.P.

MOZART: *Concerto in G major, K. 216*; Jacques Thibaud (violin) and the Lamoureux Orchestra, conducted by Paul Paray. Vox set 642, three discs, price \$4.75.

▲ I have long admired this youthful score by Mozart and held esteem for its solo performer and the conductor. The performance has been excellently recorded and Vox has been fortunate in its smooth record surfaces. Thibaud at 67 is not the faultless player of former years but he still retains the beauty and delicacy of tone which made him famous. His stylistic integrity is admirable though his technical prowess is no longer on a par. Yet, like Kreisler before

him, he can still sustain an audience's respect, and this was borne out by the ovation he received when he appeared last year as soloist in the Lalo *Symphonie espagnole* with the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra. I feel, listening to this recorded performance, as Virgil Thomson did when he heard the Lalo — "Accustomed as we are to the heavier-handed and more sentimental Russian style [of violin playing], it is no end refreshing to return to the smaller and finer but musically ample manner" of men like Thibaud.

—P.H.R.

RACHMANINOFF: *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*; Artur Rubinstein (piano) and Philharmonia Orchestra of London, conducted by Walter Susskind. Victor set DM-1269, three discs, price \$4.75. ▲ Like the Second Concerto, this *Rhapsody* has retained its popularity through the years. It uses for its initial theme the famous *Caprice No. 24* (for unaccompanied violin) by Paganini — the same theme used by Brahms in his *Paganini Variations*, by Schumann and Liszt in pianistic exploitations of

the leaping theme, and by still other composers. Rachmaninoff's is a big, romantic composition, richly scored, with the type of piano figuration only he could write. It is a real virtuoso piece in the old tradition, and it contains some of the composer's best lyric inspirations.

There have been prior recordings, Rachmaninoff himself made one, and Victor also listed a Moiseiwitsch version. Together with the new Rubinstein, they form an interesting trio. Rachmaninoff's remains unassailable, though it has dated as a recording. The Moiseiwitsch, though, remains uncommonly vital in sound, even if it does not have the brightness of the latest addition to the catalogue. In some respects, the Rubinstein is *too* brilliant; often the piano leaps out at you with a clarity it would not achieve in the concert hall. It will take an extremely well-balanced receiver, furthermore, to take some of the rugged fortissimos without distorting.

Rubinstein is happy in this type of showy music. Rachmaninoff displayed more control, Moiseiwitsch more poetry, but Rubin-

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stein has most strength. He makes the piano part thrilling — strong, clean phrases, immense virtuosity, powerful climaxes. All three pianists display a valid approach toward the music, and final preference will be a matter of individual taste. This listener would not dare to make a choice; any one of the above versions would satisfy him until a pianist comes along who has the musicianship and exactitude of Rachmaninoff, the brilliance and virtuosity of Rubinstein. Which means quite a long wait; and, anyway, a pianist with the incredible attributes of those three mingled together would be a monster, not a human being. —H.C.S.



DELIUS: *Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 1*; Louis Kaufman and Theodore Sidenberg. Concert Hall Unlimited issue, set AO, two discs, price \$5.25.

▲It would be hard to predict listener reception of this set, for the music pays merely lip-service to the sonata form and all through one feels the violin (Delius' own instrument) is nearer to his heart than the piano. Ralph Hill has said of Delius' chamber music: "These works are tone poems rather than sonatas . . . the music is essentially lyrical and rhapsodic and flows with that ease and continuity so characteristic of the composer's style". In his early life Delius had a dislike for formal chamber music, incurred by his father's passion for quartet and other instrumental group gatherings at regular intervals in the home. Almost essentially the dreamer, no doubt eager but unable to express himself at the time, he resented being forced to listen to such programs. Though the performances were of a high order, Heseltine tells us that "this surfeit of good things became a little wearisome and developed in him [Delius] a distaste for chamber music, which lasted for many years". Is it any wonder that when he turned to that more intimate style he preferred to perpetuate his rhapsodic leanings? In two movements this work suggests a song for the violin, discreetly accompanied by the piano. It has its moments of beauty, sweet-

ness and even animation, but like so many meandering compositions it has its dullish patches. Kaufman's playing has both suavity and sparkle, and Sidenberg provides a competent accompaniment. There is more than a suggestion that both players are enjoying themselves and it is this fact which will help make the music appealing to many. Excellent recording. —P.H.R.



GREEN: *Romance* (based on a theme by Paganini); and **MOZART:** *Minuet in D* (both featured in the film, *The Magic Bow*); Yehudi Menuhin (violin) and Gerald Moore (piano). Victor 10-inch disc 10-1459, price \$1.00.

▲Not having seen *The Magic Bow*, I cannot say how these pieces fit in. From the competence of Menuhin's performances I would be inclined to say his artistry (off scenes, of course) is a worthwhile feature. I believe *The Magic Bow* deals with the life of Paganini. The lush *Romance* of Green strikes an incongruous note, but probably finds approval from most people. I wonder if Paganini would have played Mozart as simply and eloquently as Menuhin. Mr. Moore's accompaniments are discreetly and suavely handled. Good balance between the instruments in the recording. —P.G.

KREISLER: *Liebesleid*, and *Liebesfreud*; Zino Francescatti (violin) with Arthur Balsam at the piano. Columbia 10-inch disc 17560-D, price \$1.00.

▲Columbia calls these performance a handsome tribute from a young master to an old. Francescatti assuredly plays with a suavity and tonal beauty recalling Kreisler in his heyday. Good recording. —P.G.

MENDELSSOHN (arr. Heifetz): *Songs without Words — Sweet Remembrance, Op. 19, No. 1*; and **STRAVINSKY:** *Berceuse from The Fire Bird*; **SHOSTAKOVICH** (trans. Glickman): *Danse Fantastique*; Jascha Heifetz (violin) with Emanuel Bay at the piano. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1457, price \$1.00.

▲Somebody christened Heifetz the most perfect performer of encores before the pub-

lic. Certainly he endows these pieces (which he may or may not include as regular concert numbers) with rare tonal beauty and a technical ease that dissipates criticism. However, there are many of us that do not cotton to so many transcriptions, though they probably have their usefulness with aspiring young violinists. Good recording.

—P.G.



BEETHOVEN: *For Elise* (Bagatelle in A minor); and DEBUSSY: *Reverie*; José Iturbi (piano). Victor 10-inch disc 10-1458, price \$1.00.

▲Movie fans, who love Mr. Iturbi, will go for this disc in a big way. Others, who know the Gieseking or Schmitz recordings of the early Debussy piece and the Schnabel or Joyce versions of the Beethoven, will hardly find an urge to transfer their affections. The brittle, disjointed manner in which Iturbi plays the opening phrases of *For Elise* left me with no incentive to proceed further.

—P.G.

CHOPIN: *Andante Spianato* and *Polonaise* (Op. 22); *Valse in E flat* (Op. 18); played by Claudio Arrau (pianist) and the Little Orchestra Society conducted by Thomas K. Scherman. Columbia set MX-307, two discs, price \$3.50.

▲An early work, the *Andante Spianato* and

Polonaise is not one of Chopin's more distinguished efforts. The *Andante* (which begins with a phrase identical with the opening of Charpentier's *Depuis le jour*) is beginning to sound dated, and the *Polonaise* is immature compared to the giants in A flat and F sharp minor. It would be better had Chopin cut it a little. Pianistically, though, it is effective, and the glittering coda will always attract virtuosos.

The work was originally written as a piano solo. Chopin later added an orchestral accompaniment to the *Polonaise* only — a quite superfluous gesture, as Huneker points out. Huneker also mentions a Scharwenka orchestration, calling it "tactful." It is never used. Indeed, I have never heard the work played at an orchestral concert, though it turns up often enough at piano recitals and has been recorded several times in its original form (the last version being one by Horowitz).

In this new set, the recording is a little glassy in the upper registers (perhaps due to the instrument upon which Arrau is playing). The pianist renders the *Andante* clearly and with a few reservations: a little inhibited and over-objective perhaps, but with a praiseworthy avoidance of needless emotional gestures. His work in the *Polonaise* can be more readily admired, for this is neat, technically expert playing that also has the virtues of delicacy and good taste. Scherman's accompaniments are entirely too negative. Chopin's orchestration is admittedly tentative, but even so the conductor surely could have been more assertive. On



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the final side, Arrau plays the popular *E flat Valse* with fluency. —H.C.S.

FALLA: *Ritual Fire Dance* from *Love, the Magician*, and *Nana* from *Seven Popular Spanish Songs*; Arthur Whittimore and Jack Lowe (duo-pianists). Victor disc 12-0582, price \$1.25.

▲The *Ritual Fire Dance* lacks increasing excitement, and the dynamic expression in the bass is not as effectively handled as it might be. Only Rubinstein seems to make this piece completely acceptable on the piano. *Nana*, a lullaby, proves surprisingly effective in transcription for two pianos and the playing is nicely handled. Some of the decoration is not quite as de Falla wrote it, but perhaps appoggiatura notes as used are better on the keyboard instrument. Good piano recording. —P.G.

SCHUMANN: *Etudes Symphoniques*; played by Alexander Brailowsky (piano). Victor set DM-1272, three discs, price \$4.75.

▲The buyer interested in these *Etudes Symphoniques* (Op. 13), also known as the *Symphonic Variations*, does not have too much of a choice. Although it is one of Schumann's finest compositions, only one version has been available up to now — the not too satisfactory one by Edward Kilenyi, released early in 1940. Which is a reminder of the low state 1949 finds the piano music of Robert Schumann. We badly need new recordings of the *Carnaval*, *Fantasy in C*, *Papillons*, *Album for the Young* and *Faschingschwanz*, to mention the first that come to mind. And there is a wonderful collection — the *Intermezzi*, Op. 4 — that appears to have escaped recording entirely.

There is no point discussing the pre-Kilenyi versions of the *Etudes*, since they are hopelessly antiquated. Reviewing Kilenyi's work in the March, 1940, issue, I pointed out the lack of control. Brailowsky, on the other hand, has plenty of control, but I am not too happy over his results. His playing is a little cold and matter-of-fact, somewhat divorced from the color and romanticism of the music. Rhythmically he is a little erratic, though in justice to him it should be mentioned that those rhythmic aberrations are his idea of a rubato. At any rate, Brailowsky's clear, rather mannered playing is to be preferred over the flurried quality of

Kilenyi's. The recording here is good, though not too bright. Indications are that it stems from a few years back. —H.C.S.

SCHUMANN: *Warum? Grillen, Traumeswirren*, Op. 12, Nos. 3, 4 and 7; Ania Dorfman (piano). Victor disc 12-0424, price \$1.25.

▲Miss Dorfman previously recorded *Aufschwung* (No. 2) which along with these pieces belong in Schumann's *Fantasiestuecke* — eight lyrical compositions with fanciful titles. Harold Bauer some years ago played the entire group but unfortunately the recording was not on a par with his artistry. Miss Dorfman conveys the mood of *Warum?* — surely a lover's question eloquently asked. How reminiscent of Chopin this piece is. *Grillen* or *Whims* is marked "with humor" but there is more whimsy than true humor in it and the middle section belies the marking. Miss Dorfman plays this neatly though for me its mood is not truly apprehended. *Traumeswirren* or *Dream Visions*, one of the loveliest of the eight pieces, is handled delicately and gracefully. The piano tone is realistic. —J.N.

VIVALDI-BACH (arr. Lev): *Concerto in D minor* (3 sides); and BACH, J. E.: *Fantasy and Fugue in F* (1 side); Ray Lev (piano). Concert Hall Unlimited issue, set AH (vinylite) price \$5.25.

▲It is strange that the familiar organ arrangement which Bach made has never been recorded in its entirety. The work is perhaps best known to record buyers through the Siloti orchestra arrangement (from the original Vivaldi) in the Boston Symphony performance (Victor 886). In December 1939, Victor issued an arrangement for piano of the Bach organ work made and performed by Cortot. The stylistic integrity of the French pianist was most persuasive in this music and the recording quite good. Naturally, Concert Hall betters the reproduction with its extended range. The tonal quality here is warm-hued in the rich bass parts but the treble tends to some brittleness. Miss Lev gives a most impressive performance. Her arrangement suggests a study of Busoni's transcriptions of Bach, and shows, as the annotator says, "what can be done by a pianist who knows the intention and mechanics of the original music as well as the

potentialities of the piano for reproducing them". She exploits fully the potentialities of the instrument's sonorities. Pianists will like this arrangement for its virtuosic possibilities — it advantageously exploits a performer. Miss Lev's filler, a work by Johann Ernst Bach (a cousin of J. C.) has more historical than musical interest. I rather think it would be more effective on the harpsichord, though its bravura is fully exploited by the pianist. —J.N.

Long Playing Discs

▲Among recent long-playing releases by Columbia is the admirable Serkin-Reiner performance of the Brahms *Piano Concerto No. 1* (disc ML 4100); Rodzinski's better recorded and defined rendition of Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 1* (disc ML 4101); the colorful *Russian Easter Overture* of Rimsky-Korsakoff coupled with the *Classical Symphony* of Prokofieff played with sumptuous tone by the Philadelphia Orch. (disc ML 2035); and Beethoven's *Quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131* in the famous performance by the Budapest String Quartet (disc ML 4106).

Columbia has also repressed the Ormandy-Philadelphia Orch. rendition of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* (discs ML 4103/04). The new issue holds more interest for us in its inclusion of Paul Kletzki's well paced and admirably detailed reading of Beethoven's *Leonore Overture No. 3* (Philharmonia Orch.) than in Ormandy's traversal of the symphony. We would have wished for the Weingartner version, dated as it is, redubbed on Microgroove records. Paul Robson's sets of *Spirituals* and *Popular Favorites* have been transferred to one 12-inch disc (ML 4105), and Carol Brice's two albums — Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* and *Sacred Arias of Bach* — may be had on one record (ML 4108). The performances of Mozart's *Two Piano Concerto, K. 365* (Vronsky-Babin-Mitropoulos) and Mozart's *Concerto for Three Pianos, K. 242* (Lhevinne-Vronsky-Babin-The Little Orch. Society) hardly deserved its issue on ML 4098, for both are superficially performed. It is unlikely that

many unfamiliar with the composer's great concertos would be tempted to look them up from acquaintance with these performances. Among popular issues is Duke Ellington's set *Mood Ellington* (disc CL 6024); Morton Gould's *Symphonic Band* album (disc ML 2029); *Songs of Erin* by Kate Smith (disc CL 6031); and Nelson Eddy first collection of *Stephen Foster Songs* (disc ML 4099).



BEETHOVEN: *An die Ferne Geliebte, Op. 98* (Song Cycle); William Horne (tenor) with Franz Rupp at the piano. Mercury album DM-8, two 10-inch discs, price \$3.00.

▲This cycle is rightly regarded by many as Beethoven's "loftiest flight in lyric song". For here he writes from the heart with simplicity and tenderness which even Schubert could have envied. Schauffler says "he was as iconoclastic towards poetic rhythms and the delicacies and subtleties of the fragile music of vowels and consonants, as musicians since the dawn of song have almost invariably been", yet "instead of setting the lines he tried to set what was between them". Thus, one should intimately know the language to appreciate truly what Beethoven has accomplished in these songs. Though William Horne, who possesses a pleasant, youthful voice, commands our respect for his earnest interpretative efforts, he does not quite penetrate the inner mood of the poetry as a true German does. Perhaps familiarity with Gerhard Huesch's performance of the cycle provokes this viewpoint. Others not familiar with the Huesch, Panzera or Schlusnus versions may possibly find Mr. Horne's a satisfactory substitute. The recording is most realistic. —J.N.

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BISHOP: *Lo! Here the Gentle Lark* and **DELL'ACQUA:** *Vilanelle*; sung by Lily Pons (soprano) with orchestra conducted by Andre Kostelanetz. Columbia disc 72752-D, price \$1.25.

▲Sir Henry Bishop's amiable tonsil-curler is a florid setting of one lone stanza from Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, a long poem read nowadays by school children and quiz-show aspirants. Our grandfathers deemed it a high class number; today we are apt to class it merely high. The companion piece deals with "the swift swallow", another bird undoubtedly fed on a lush diet of cracked corn. Miss Pons sails through these tidbits in her accustomed fashion with the help of husband and his band. The flutist Frank Versaci tottles valiantly in conjunction with these exercises. —A.W.P

FLOTOW: *Marta—M'appari:* and **DONIZETTI:** *La Favorita — Spirto gentil*; Enrico Caruso (1906). Victor disc 15-1036, price \$2.50.

DONIZETTI: *Don Sebastiano — Deserto in terra*; and **MEYERBEER:** *Gli Ugonotti — Bianca al par di neve Alpina*; Enrico Caruso (1908 and 1909). Victor disc 15-1037, price \$2.50.

PEPOLI-ROSSINI: *La Danza*; and **NEAPOLITAN FOLK SONG:** *Feneste che lucive*; Enrico Caruso (1913). Victor disc 15-1040, price \$2.50.

LEONCAVALLO: *La Boheme — Io non ho che una povera stanzetta*; and **VERDI:** *Macbeth — Ah, la paterna mano*; Enrico Caruso (1911 and 1916). Victor disc 15-1038, price \$2.50.

SAINT-SAENS: *Samson et Dalila — Vois ma misère, hélas*; and **RUBINSTEIN:** *Nero — Ah, mon sort*; Enrico Caruso (1916 and 1917). Victor disc 15-1039, price \$2.50.

These five Caruso records offer a history of the noted tenor's voice and style over the years. In the *Marta* and *Favorita* selections, the voice is golden lyricism. In our memory, the tenor left no competitive example of his lyrical style comparable to his *Spirto gentil*. Yet, even here, we note some tightness in his top voice. The *Marta* seems freer than the one that was later re-recorded electrically and does not convey the off-pitch notes at the end. The aria from the forgotten *Don Sebastiano* of Donizetti holds little in-

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terest other than the singing, which shows a blend of the tenor's lyric and dramatic styles, as does also the air from *Huguenots*. The latter is one of Caruso's finest recordings, beautifully sung and phrased. Later, he was to sing this role in French with a notable cast including Destinn, Hempel, Scotti and Didur. The voice had grown heavier by 1913 when the Pepoli-Rossini *Tarantella* and the Neapolitan Folk Song were made, yet the agility still remains though the high tones are pressed. But what a thrilling performance of the *Tarantella* he gives, and with what feeling he sings the *Feneste che lucive*, so melodically appealing! Marcello's aria from the neglected Leoncavallo *Bohème* is one of Caruso's best records and his singing of Macduff's aria from the almost forgotten *Macbeth* of Verdi substantiates Francis Toye's contention that much of the music of this opera is on a high plane. This too is one of Caruso's finest records. When we reach the voice of 1916 and 1917, we find it has grown darker in tone and quality. Yet, as an artist the singer has advanced greatly, and his aria from the third act of *Samson and Delilah* remains one of the most moving and artistic achievements of the tenor on record. Comparing it with the singing of Luccioni in the complete recording of this opera, just released, one realizes why Caruso's *Samson* was hailed as a great performance. The best thing that can be said about the Rubinstein operatic excerpt is that the tenor lends it wanted distinction with his singing. This is pallid, meandering music, vocally grateful perhaps but hardly sustaining in interest, unless one is intrigued with the tenor's effort to essay a trill near the end. —P.H.R.

DONIZETTI: *La Favorita* — *O mio Fernando*; Ebe Stignani (mezzo-soprano) with Symphony Orchestra of the Augusteo, Rome, conducted by Vincenzo Bellezza. Columbia disc 72727D, \$1.25.

▲ This release has especial interest because of Miss Stignani's recent American triumphs in opera and recital. Hers is a big, ample and vibrant voice, and on the evidence of her recordings she has plenty of temperament (I am not familiar with the recent Cetra set). However, it would seem that she is more concerned here with the sumptuous sound she can make than with the words she is singing: for this reason her *recitative*

lacks crispness and strong definition. In the *cantabile* the tone is lovely and very much alive, but there is no real sense of communication either here or in the final *allegro*, nor is she at all times accurate in intonation. I suppose, for all that, hers is the most satisfactory *O mio Fernando* available today, though old-timers may miss the grand manner of an Onegin or a Matzenauer. Certainly the disc is to be preferred to the recent one by Nan Merriman (Victor 11-9793). The recording has all the dimensions of real life. —P.L.M.

SONGS OF STEPHEN FOSTER, VOL. 2;

Nelson Eddy (baritone) with chorus and orchestra, conducted by Robert Armstrong. Columbia set MM-795, four discs, price \$6.00.

▲ Here we have a album of 18 more songs by Foster — some most familiar, others many of us have probably never heard. Mr. Eddy handles them in his usual easy manner, clearly enunciating each word, and wisely avoiding stress of sentiment. —P.G.

FOLK SONGS OF THE ITALIAN RIVIERA.

Folk Records album R-1-A, 3 10-inch discs, price \$4.00.

FOLK SONGS OF PIEMONTE. Folk Record album P-1-A, 3 10-inch discs, price \$4.00.

▲ The Riviera songs are sung by groups of peasants with a verve and unmistakable joy that make up for the somewhat raucous quality of their voices. Most of the tunes are rather commonplace though having an infectious lilt. Most attractive are the unaccompanied *Dintorni di Savona* and *Campanassa e Campanin*, the latter extolling the interminable bells heard along the Riviera. *Uga Bella*, a ligurian grape harvest song, has much humor, telling of familiar dishes consumed. Some of these songs — like *Ventimiglia Dance*, *Matin de Primavera* and the *Lantern of Genoa* — will be thrice familiar to visitors of the Riviera.

The songs of Piemonte are most attractive. The first two — *The Lovely Shepherdess* and *Maria Catalina* — are sung by singers with good voices and style. The former, with its occarina accompaniment, is a lovely song suggesting French influence. The others

have an accordion accompaniment. *Spunta il Sole* (Twilight Song) — a song of moonlight and love — has engaging melodies, while *No Trombone Tonight* is a humorous ditty which boisterously endorses wine and toasting but not the trombone, and *Smoky Suburbs* is frankly bawdy.

All these songs, recorded locally in Italy, are authentic folk melodies. The recording has been capably handled. —P.H.R.

MASSANET: *Manon* — *La Rève*, and *Werther* — *Pourquoi me reveiller?* (sung in French); Ferruccio Tagliavini (tenor), with RCA Victor Orchestra, Jean Paul Morel, conductor. Victor disc 12-0659, price \$1.25.

▲ Tagliavini sings Des Grieux's *Dream Aria* far better than the lied from *Werther*. The latter has some ingratiating *pianissimo* but the forte passages are hard toned and unpleasant. Those who know the acoustic versions of Clement or the electrical ones of Schipa would hardly admit Tagliavini's performances as competitive, for his artistry lacks the captivating qualities of his predecessors. —J.N.

VERDI: *Aida* — *Pur ti reveggo, mia dolce Aida*; *Sovra una terra estrania teco fuggir dovei*; *O terra, addio*; *Il Trovatore* — *Miserere*; Daniza Ilitsch (soprano) and Kurt Baum (tenor) with Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Max Rudolf. *Un Ballo in Maschera* — *Teco io sto* — *gran Dio! M'ami, m'ami*; *Otello* — *Già nella notte densa*; *Ed io veda fra le tue tempie oscure*; Daniza Ilitsch (soprano) and Richard Tucker (tenor) with Metropolitan Opera Orchestra conducted by Max Rudolph. Columbia set MM-798, four discs, \$6.00.

▲ I suppose it was about time for Columbia to bring out new recordings of all these duets, and by gathering them into one album the sponsors may attract a larger public than any of them would have done alone. Among them the *Ballo in Maschera* scene is virtually a novelty, for I do not believe the domestic catalogues have ever listed an electrical recording of it. Taken separately, the other duets will not obliterate memories of other artists who have recorded them.

Miss Ilitsch's voice is a big and fine one, easily equal to the demands of the music, and at times quite lovely in quality. She is,

however, not an altogether even singer, nor does she ever convey any great degree of personal warmth. Consequently hers is not a voice to haunt the memory as did those of Ponselle, Rethberg, or at her best Milanov. Of her two companions Baum is the better match for her so far as volume is concerned. But he is not a singer of great imagination, and though his voice has power and brilliance, one wants more forward production for this Italian music and more appealing tone. Tucker, on the other hand, has a lighter instrument, but his singing has more of the authentic ring. It was an interesting experiment to assign him the part of Otello in the *Love duet*, for though he is certainly not the man for that taxing role, he does provide a desirable lyricism in this scene where all genuine Otellos have their difficulties.

The microphone setup might have been better when these recordings were made. It is not unusual, of course, for voices to overwhelm the orchestra in opera records, but the best modern engineering has worked to overcome this tendency. In the impassioned music here presented a great deal might have been gained by a stronger background. I like the effect of distance when Baum sings Manrico's part in the *Miserere*, and I wish the chorus had been similarly removed. The voice of Gladys Zeiher is heard as a rather too eager Amneris at the end of the final *Aida duet*. —P.L.M.

VERDI: *Rigoletto* — *Arias and Duets*; Alexander Sved (baritone) and Lina Pagliughi (soprano) with Orchestra of the Radio Italiano, conducted by Alfredo

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Simonetto and Ugo Transini. Cetra set 109 (automatic), five discs, price \$10.20.

OPERA ARIAS: *Un Ballo in Maschera* — *Eri tu* (Verdi) (2 sides); *Otello* — *Credo in un Dio crudel*, and *Era la notte* (Verdi); *Tannhauser* — *O du mein Abendstern* (Wagner); *Guglielmo Tell* — *Resta immobile* (Rossini); Alexander Sved (baritone). Cetra set 114, three discs, price \$6.52.

▲ The Hungarian baritone, Alexander Sved, does some of his best singing in these two albums, sustaining his reputation as a versatile and gifted operatic artist. His Rigoletto conveys both self-pity and bitterness, in keeping with the character, and a paternal tenderness which is affecting. His is a rich, dark-toned voice, tending to heaviness, which he handles much better here than when I heard him in past seasons at the Metropolitan Opera. There is little evidence of the old prevailing muscularity, though occasional vibrato suggests insufficient freedom of the moment. His *pianissimo* singing is generally admirable and free, unusual in a voice of his type. His *Eri tu* (complete with recitative) is uneven with a rather obvious emotionalism, yet it has vitality in its dramatic outlines. His *Credo* though lacking the true sinister bite has a vehement forcefulness. His *Cassio's Dream* remains more convincing. There is both beauty of tone and poise in his lyrical singing (in German) of Wolfram's air from *Tannhauser*, and the *Prayer* from *William Tell* sustains interest though stressing more sentiment than despair.

The singing of Lina Pagliughi is consistently beautiful. In my estimation, she is the finest coloratura soprano now before the public. Her voice revives memories of both Galli-Curci and Hempel. Stylistically and vocally, she has grown since her performance of Gilda in the old Victor set, made around 1928. Her tone is now perfectly focused, freely and easily reproduced throughout the range, and her phrasing consistently musical. Her *Caro nome* though making free use of virtuosic display, is convincing because it is sung without effort. One can believe it representative of the fluctuations of the young girl's heart. The Rigoletto album contains all the important highlights of the two characters. Opening with the monologue,

Pari siamo, it continues with the complete duet (3 sides) between Gilda and Rigoletto from Act 1, Scene 2, after which comes the *Caro nome*. Side 6 contains the aria, *Cortigiani, vil razza*, sides 7 and 8 the duet which follows ending with *Si vendetta*, and sides 9 and 10 the duet from the last act where Gilda is delivered to her father in the sack.

At this time I would like to speak of an earlier album, issued by Cetra, containing a group of solos by Pagliughi (set No. 8, price \$11.50). In it the soprano reveals her versatility of style, singing two arias from Mozart's *Seraglio*, one each from *Il Guarany*, *Il Re* (Giordano), *Carmen*, and *Semiramide*. In these her lyrical style proves quite as convincing as her coloratura; her Mozart singing being most appreciable. Recording of all the above has been excellently accomplished.

—P.H.R.

YOUMANS: *Great Day and More Than You Know*, both from *Great Day*; Allan Jones (tenor) with Ray Sinatra and his Orchestra. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1455, price \$1.00.

▲ Jones has a way with musical show tunes and here he is in top form. Ray Sinatra handles the orchestral accompaniments competently, and the recording does justice to all concerned.

—J.N.

Popular Orchestra

Arr. GOULD: *Do You Remember?*; Morton Gould and his Orchestra. Columbia set MM-787, for 10-inch discs, price \$4.90.

▲ Gould dresses up a group of old-time popular songs. There should be a spoken word before each dating them for listeners; this would awaken more than a barrel of nostalgic memories. Less nostalgic are the sophisticated arrangements that the conductor has contrived, but this being 1948 and radio being what it is — well, all things, being equal, Mr. Gould lives up to himself and to the times. Do you remember — the *Twelfth Street Rag* (1914), *Nola*, a product of the next year, *Poor Butterfly* (1916) (Kreiser did a violin version of it), *Dardanella* (1919, the year peace came, so we

thought), *Whispering* (it came into being with Harding's election in 1920), *The Sheik of Araby* (shades of Rudolph Valentino — some called it the *Shreik*), *My Blue Heaven* (1927), and *On the Sunny Side of the Street* (Ted Lewis and his Band popularized this on a Columbia record in the 30s)? They're all here to recall the old days, and also to remind us that popular music was very, very sentimental — do I hear cries "when did it stop being sentimental?" But, of course, sentiment, like sweets, has an enormous appeal. —P.G.

In The Popular Vein

Enzo Archetti

Give My Regards To Broadway; George M. Cohan, Jr., with The Guild Choristers, and Orchestra conducted by Thomas Lender Jones. Victor Album P-227, 4-10" discs.

●If ever an album was made for sentimentalists, this is it. It contains George M. Cohan, Senior's best loved compositions, sung by his son, in a manner, and even a voice, very reminiscent of his father's. The orchestrations and choral backgrounds are also nostalgic. Besides the song which gives the album its title, there is *Forty-five Minutes From Broadway*, *Mary's A Grand Old Name*, *You're A Grand Old Flag*, *Over There*, *So Long*, *Mary, Little Nelly*, *Kelly, Harrigan*, and *Yankee Doodle Boy*. Very well done.

Join the Band; Billy May and His Orchestra. Capitol Album BD102, 4-10" discs.

●The idea is not new. Columbia currently has Add-a-Part records in its catalog in which one instrument of an ensemble is omitted, thus permitting budding instrumentalists to "sit in" as a member of a quartet for practice or to gain experience in playing with others. Some years ago, Majestic (a Columbia sponsored label, I believe) issued a series of discs of concerto movements with the piano parts omitted, again to permit soloists to practice with an orchestra, in private. But this is the first time the idea has been carried over into the popular field.

All eight sides are expertly arranged, excellently played backgrounds of popular pieces, permitting a singer or instrumentalist to practice or join with a full band. Instructions and keys are given inside the front cover. The numbers are tried and true: *Sweet Lorraine*, *I Got Rhythm*, *Honeysuckle Rose*, *Body and Soul*, *Surrender Dear*, *Sunset and Vine Blues*, *Just You Just Me*, and *I May Be Wrong*. The re-

cordings are excellent. Everything is conducive to a pleasant, instructive time.

Capitol is to be congratulated for pioneering this idea. It could be developed into some exciting and sensational records, priceless to singers and instrumentalists alike. For instance — backgrounds by famous orchestras (Benny Goodman, Ellington, Billy Butterfield, Stan Kenton, etc.) of numbers made famous by the orchestras, or which made the orchestras famous.

So Dear To My Heart and *It's Whatcha Do With Whatcha Got*; Freddie Martin and His Orchestra. Vocals by Glenn Hughes, Stuart Wade, and The Martin Men. Victor 20-3130.

Lavender Blue and *Down Among the Sheltering Palms*; Swing and Sway with Sammy Kaye. Vocal by Don Cornell, The Three Kaydets, and The Kaye Choir. Victor 20-3100.

It's Whatcha Do With Whatcha Got and *It's Up To You*; Gene Krupa and His Orchestra. Vocals by Buddy Hughes. Columbia 38296.

●All except *Down Among the Sheltering Palms* and *It's Up To You* are from Walt Disney's forthcoming picture, *So Dear To My Heart*. The music promises well for the picture. The tunes alternate between the lushly sentimental and the bouncy. It is not hard to imagine the kind of fantasies Walt Disney has woven around them. Gene Krupa's disc has more snap than Martin's of the snappy tune. The sentimental numbers are equally well done by Martin and Kaye. Good souvenirs of the picture.

Jalousie and Temptation; Rise Stevens, with Orchestra conducted by Dudley King. Columbia 4528-M.

●With all her good intentions, Miss Stevens is very much out of her element here. Lesser singers have done very much better with these songs. They are not things which can stand much "artiness."

Impia and *Who Knows?* Rene Touzet and (a) Rhumba Rhythm Section and (b) His Orchestra. Capitol 15252.

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The Wedding Rhumba and Tambo; Capitol 15244. *El Mosquito and Los Hijos De Buda*; Capitol 15125. Chuy Reyes and His Orchestra. Vocals by Tony Gari.

Con Maracas and Sunday In Old Santa Fe; José Morand and His Orchestra. Vocals by José Duval. Victor 20-3101.

Rumba Gallega and Tea For Two; Ralph Font and His Orchestra. Apollo 1126.

●A swell batch of discs for the devotee of the Latin-American dance!

The Tommy Dorsey Story; narrated by Johnny Victor, and *Until*; Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra. Vocals by Harry Prime, The Clark Sisters, and The Town Criers. Victor 20-3061.

●A strange record. The first side is a narration of Tommy Dorsey's contributions in creating new popular song and jazz styles, illustrated with snatches from famous recordings of each period. All this leads to *Until* which is hailed as the first of a new style. It is not as strikingly new or as exciting as *Marie* or *Song of India*. It is difficult to see the necessity for all the hullabaloo.

Suddenly It Jumped and My Honey's Lovin' Arms; Duke Ellington and His Orchestra. Victor 20-3135.

●Two swell Duke recordings, with *Suddenly* in the lead. A Duke original, in which his rhythmic playing is the nucleus of an amazing swirl of music by Oscar Pettiford, Taft Jordan, and Jimmy Hamilton. It shouldn't be missed. Reverse is almost as good in a different way.

La Chismosa and No Hay Derecho; Trio Aztlan. Capitol 52000.

●Both pieces are romantic songs which the glib tongues of this Trio make sound quite attractive. Excellent recording.

So Long, Darling and I Never Had A Chance; Joe Alexander, with Dave Cavanaugh's Music. Capitol 15274.

●Alexander doesn't do justice to the first — a good blues — but the orchestra does with Benny Carter's smooth alto and Jack Marshall's mellifluous guitar. Alexander is more at home in the romantic bit on the reverse where Ernie Felice's accordion points up his singing nicely. Unexciting but pleasant.

Auld Lang Syne and Doodle Doo Doo; Tiny Hill and His Orchestra. Vocals by Tiny Hill and Erwin Bendel. Columbia 38048.

●The lovable old song is presented in the way we like to hear it on New Year's Eve — with the right tempo, sentiment, and the nostalgic mood. *Doodle Doo Doo*, an oldie too, is of a different kind, with different treatment by Tiny Hill. The version invites group singing. A swell party record!

A Little Learnin' Is A Dangerous Thing — 2 parts; Frank Sinatra and Pearl Bailey, with Orchestra under the direction of Axel Stordahl. Columbia 38362.

●An unusual combination and record. Solid blues, treated as a conversation piece interspersed with some solid blues singing by Pearl Bailey. Both Sinatra and Stordahl are surprisingly understanding in their treatment of blues. This record has originality and musical interest. Don't pass it up!

Nao Chore and Jucataada; The Brazilians, featuring Nestor Amaral and Joe Carioca. Capitol 15324.

●These Brazilians, introduced by Dinah Shore on several of her records, play sambas with élan and rhythm. There is some marvelous guitar playing by Joe Carioca in *Jucataada*.

The Smalltown Band and Minot Schottische; Spike Haskell and The Jolly Millers. Capitol 15275.

●The imitation of the small town band is labeled as traditional. I have heard funnier versions. It's much too serious here. The schottische is the best. Good playing and recording.

In My Dreams and The Chocolate Choo-Choo; Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra. Vocals by Vaughn Monroe and The Moon Maids. Victor 20-3133.

●This kind of sepulchral-toned mooning gets a bit dreary after a listening or two. But maybe there is a public for it!

Canadian Capers and I Go In When the Moon Comes Out; The Three Suns. Vocals by The Sun Maids and Artie Dunn. Victor 20-3134.

●The classic *Capers* is a first class Three Suns arrangement which should make history. Reverse is good, too, though not in the same class musically.

Blue Champagne and East of the Sun; Tex Beneke and His Orchestra. Victor 20-3131.

●*Blue Champagne* is blue in the best Beneke style. Neat! *East of the Sun* (which should be a push-over for a lush Glenn Miller type arrangement) is bouncier but less interesting musically, and Garry Stevens' singing doesn't help much.

Wabash Blues and High Society; Pee Wee Hunt and His Orchestra. Capitol 15299.

●*High Society* is better, as jazz, but the general feeling on both sides is that Pee Wee is kidding somebody, with his wah-wah trombone choruses, fast clarinet passages, and dizzy-finger piano playing reminiscent of way back when. If you take them that way, the disc is good fun.

Silver Moon and I'll See You Again; Frank De Vol and His Orchestra. Capitol 15323.

●Tunes from Romberg's *My Maryland* and Coward's *Bitter Sweet*, in tasteful orchestral arrangements, obviously by Frank De Vol

himself. They are warmly treated and well recorded.

Polka 'Round the World; Johnny Martin and His Headliners. Capitol Album CC-107, 3-10" discs. **The Apple Tree At My Window** — Polka and Sleeping Girl Waltz; Capitol 52003. **The Sun Is In the West** — Polka and Shining Moon Polka; Capitol 52005. Julius Sliwa and Al Halas, with Lobozon Polka Orchestra. **Drive On Polka and Nightingale and Crow Polka;** Steve Adamczyk and His Hungry Five. Capitol 52006. **Vet's Polka and Love Never Dies** — Waltz; Johnny Vadal and His Orchestra. Victor 20-3202. **Cherry Pickers Polka and Woodchopper's Song** — Schottish; Six Fat Dutchmen, directed by H. Loeffelmacher. Victor 20-3136. **Windy City Polka and Red Raven Waltz;** Lawrence Duchow and His Red Raven Orchestra. Victor 20-3219.

● Devotees of the Polish hop will glory in this batch of athletic music. There's genuine feeling and rhythm. And no wonder! All but two of the discs are by Polish musicians and who should know better than they how to play this merry, foot-tickling music!

The album contains the *Bell, Julida, Clarinet, Monopol, Barbara, and Laughing Polkas* — the first and last most appealing. All are genuine Polish polkas despite the album title. The two records by non-Polish groups are readily discernible for the difference in orchestration and enjoyable in spite of a four-squaredness in rhythm. Somehow, the waltzes and schottish that crept in here sound out of place.

Songs of Irving Berlin; Rise Stevens, with Orchestra conducted by Dudley King. Columbia Album MM784, 3-10" discs.

● With this album, Rise Stevens is more successful than in other similar sets as she treats the numbers with a sincerity suggesting a real affection for them. Here, she doesn't sound like an opera star condescending to sing a song not worthy of her position. The concert includes *Say It With Music, They Say It's Wonderful, How Deep Is the Ocean, Always, Easter Parade, and Remember*.

Show Tunes; Artie Shaw and His Orchestra. Victor Album P-230, 4-10" discs.

● All reissues "by request" of discs which have established themselves as classics of their kind. Artie has never duplicated their fine bounce, smooth rhythm, good improvisations, and excellent musicianship.

The Traveling Salesman Polka; Jo Stafford, with Tex Williams and His Western Caravan. **The Prisoner of Love's Song;** Jo Stafford, with Red Ingle and His Natural Seven. Capitol 15312.

● To say the least, Jo Stafford is a good sport. She'll try anything, with anyone. Numbers like these, for instance. And surprisingly, they click — especially the polka. Neither is uproariously funny but both are good for a chuckle.

Romance; Jane Powell, with Orchestra conducted by Carmen Dragon. Columbia Album M788, 3-10" discs.

● Jane Powell is a charming young lady on the screen and on the radio. And when she sings things like *If's A Most Unusual Day*, she is delightful but on records her voice is much smaller, more delicate, and not always well controlled. There is no great depth of feeling but, then, none of the pieces requires more than heart-on-the-sleeve emotion, with the exception of *Grieg's Springtide*, which she sings

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with disarming naiveté. The accompaniments are modest and unobtrusive.

Perfume Set To Music; Orchestra and Chorus directed by Leslie Baxter. Dr. Samuel Hoffman at the Theremin. Victor Album P-231, 3-10" discs.

● This is a suite of musical sketches by Gordon Revel, British composer of many hits, inspired by the fragrance of six Corday perfumes. A fascinating idea, though not a new one for Duke Ellington, Debussy, and others wrote similarly inspired music. Revel succeeds very well in several of these numbers, though I cannot agree with his choice of the Theremin to suggest the wafting perfume. The wordless chorus and the orchestra ably assist in suggesting the exotic allure of subtle scents, but one suspects the ladies will prefer the real thing to this. Not jazz or dance music, though characteristics of both are used with effect.

Cocktail Capers; The Art Van Damme Quintette. Capitol Album CC-105, 3-10" discs. *The Man I Love* and *I Know That You Know*; The Art Van Damme Quintette. Capitol 15322.

● Accordion, vibes, piano, guitar, bass, and rhythm blend and effervesce into some delightful music which is just right with cocktails and conversation. It is soft, guaranteed not to knock you off your bar stool; it is light and frothy, yet original enough for you to take notice and yet relax too. The single is in the same vein.

Piano Reflections; Claude Thornhill, with Rhythm Section. Columbia Album C-176, 4-10" discs. *Polka Dots and Moonbeams* and *I Knew You When*; Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra. Vocals by Buddy Hughes. Columbia 38347.

● This album is a treat for many who, like me, have lamented the all too brief piano solos in Claude Thornhill's orchestral records. At last, one can sit back and enjoy a series of pleasant, familiar melodies, treated in the incomparable, delicate, and intimate Thornhill manner, replete with feeling, taste, and musicianship.

The numbers include *Lady of the Evening*, *Someday I'll Find You*, and a Thornhill original — *Memory of An Island*. The accompaniments are felt more than they are heard. A must!

The single bears all the good traits and pleasant Thornhill characteristics. *Polka Dots* is in the same reflective vein as the album pieces, with a better measure of piano solo than usual. The reverse is in the juke box style though still quite individual. Its piano solo is too brief.

I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm and *I'm Tellin' You, Sam*; Les Brown and His Orchestra. Columbia 38324.

● Les Brown at his best. The first is one of his typical bouncy, smooth-paced, warm-toned improvisations on a good tune. The reverse is almost as good though more importance is placed on the voice ("Stumpy" Brown's). But

the instrumental introduction and coda are gems. The opening theme sounds Handelian. Definitely a must.

Straighten Up and Fly and *Gee Baby, Ain't I Good To You*; Capitol 15284. *Flo and Joe* and *That's A Natural Fact*; Capitol 15320. *For Sentimental Reasons* and *I Can't See For Lookin'*; Capitol 15311. The King Cole Trio.

● *For Sentimental Reasons* is definitely a hit in the K.C.T.'s best romantic manner and *Straighten Up* is barely a pace behind as a rhythmic hit. All the others are more of their usual stuff, a little of which can go a long way. Only *Flo and Joe* is a shade more interesting because of the Latin rhythms.

All I Want For Christmas and Happy New Year; Spike Jones and His City Slickers. Victor 20-3177.

● If this record hasn't driven you crazy by now, you are immune to Spike's zaniness. These are not samples of Spike's best brand of whackiness, but they are amusing. The kids love the false tooth song, but they don't have to wear 'em. Excellent recording.

Buttons and Bows; Dinah Shore and Her Happy Valley Boys. *Daddy-O*; Dinah Shore, with Orchestra under the direction of Sonny Burke. Columbia 38284.

● This is the version of *Buttons and Bows*. A peppy tune, so engaging that Bob Hope's film *Paleface* (from which the song is taken) is being called the Buttons and Bows picture. Dinah and her boys do a bang up job of it and of the reverse, which is from Danny Kaye's picture *A Song Is Born*. Excellent recording.

Blue Christmas and *Here Comes Santa Clause*; Jesse Rogers and His '49ers. Victor 20-3243.

● A little late for the Season, but it's too good to leave unmentioned. *Here Comes Santa Claus* is 1948's Christmas song and it is sure to rival *Santa Claus Is Coming To Town*, *Merry Christmas To You*, and *White Christmas* in future Seasons. The song has a simple directness which appeals and a catchy, nursery-like tune and rhythm which sticks long after the record is finished. *Blue Christmas* is not of the same grade. The theme is out of tune with the Season. Rogers and his group do a splendid job.

Hold Me and I wanna Go Where You Go, Then I'll Be Happy; Peggy Lee, with Dave Barbour and His Orchestra. Capitol 15298.

● The Lee-Barbour combination is still hard to beat in numbers romantic or rhythmic. There is a rapport which is more than conjugal. *Hold Me* has a delicate Debussyian atmosphere, in both the singing and the accompaniment. Beautifully done. The reverse has a bouncier charm. Splendid recording.

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